private sector to open captive coal mines for setting up power plants; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER. OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OP COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 has been amended with effect from 9-6-93 to allow private sector participation in coal mining for captive consumption of Power, Iron and Steel and other end use as the Central Government, may, by notification, specify, besides allowing private sector participation in washing of coal.

CIL's agreements with Russian firms for purchase of spares

3560. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA;
SHRI ANANT RAM JAISWAL:
SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER: SHRI IQBAL SINGH: SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Coal India Limited has entered into an agreement with Russian firms for the purchase of spares worth over rupees 40 crores while a number of Committees set up by CIL to study tho spares problems had recommended that with the collapse of the Soviet Union direct contact with the manufacturers should foe established discontinuing the practice to obtain the supply through traditional houses; and

(b) if so, what are the resons for not adhering to the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) A delegation from Coal India Limited has recently signed nine contracts directly with five Russian Manufacturers of original equipment for purchase of spares required for the equipment, previously imported from former USSR, for a total value of US $ 5866109.70 FOB, which is equivalent to Rs. 18.78 crores. No Committee has been set up 'by CIL as indicated. A delegation of officers from CIL had visited former USSR Republics earlier, to ascertain the situation.

(b) Does not arise.

Charging of premium on coal

3561. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA; Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to tate:

(a) whether some recommendations allotments received from the sponsoring authorities/coordinating agencies like the Ministry of Industry. Central Electricity Authority etc, allotted coal to consumers from specified sources which included specified collieries carrying 10 per cent premium;

(b) if so, whether this was challenged in the High Court of Madhya Pradesh;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof;

(d) what was the need for charging a premium over and above the earlier fixed price;

(e) whether authority in this regard was given to CIL by his Ministry, if so, whether any amendment in the law was made so that Coal India could fix the price; and

('f) what is the basis and criteria on which the CIL fixes the price and whether there is any check on such price fixation by CIL because it is after

all a sole producer of coal in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJ1T KUMAR PANJA); (a) to (c) Some recommendationsj allotments of coal were being received from sp onsoring authrities coordinating agencies on specified collieries carry ing 10 per cent premium. In such cases it was presumed that the recommen dation! allotment was made with the concurrence of the, concerned consu mer. Some consumers however challenged the charging of 10 per cent premium on coal produced in specified collie ries over and above the prices noti fied for different grades of coal. High Court at Jabalpur disposed of those petitions on the assurance from the coal companies to the effect that consumers need not necessarily buy coal from the collieries carrying 10 per cent premium and they are free to purchase coal from other collieries.

(d) to (f) CIL does not fix the price of coal. The price of coal including premium on coal is fixed by the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred on it by clauses 3 and 4 of the Colliery Control Order, 1945, as continued in force by section 16 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. Coal Irdia Limited (CIL) charges the price of coal as per the statutory notification of the Government. Generally the criterion followed for fixing the price of coai is the recommendation made, after study, by the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices. Under clause 4 of Colliery Control Order, different prices can be fixed for coal produced in different collieries.

Status of ash as vendible coal

3562. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether coal beyond 35 per cent ash was not considered as vendible coal till the erstwhile Coal Boafd was working;

(b) if so, under what considera tions the present grading of coal up-to 55 per cent ash is also declared as coal for industrial use; and

(c) whether it is a fact that lower variety of coal creates problems of pollution and of handling while uti lising the same in different industries?

THE MIINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Yes, Sir. The erstwhile Coal Board had been grading coals of ash content upto 35 per cent and coals beyond this range of ash were considered to foe non-vendible.

(b) and (c) In the present grading system coals with ash and moisture content upto 55 per cent have been considered as vendible. The conser vation of valuable natural energy resources like coal was the main con sideration taken into account in the present grading system. The consu mption profile of coal has undergone vast changes over the last two de cades. Earlier, the design of combus tion equipment was such that only coals with high heat value could be utilised. With the emergence of Pul verised Firing of coal particularly in the thermal power station boilers, it has become possible to utilise coals with high ash content with high ther mal efficiency The modem coal, combustion equipment parti-cularly the power station boilers can handle coals with high ash content without any serious problem. The environmental pollution mainly arises from the 'fly ash' produced when the coal is burnt. This prob-lem can be considerably reduced by using beneficiated coal.

Non availability of coal to Gujarat Electricity Board and SSI nnits

3563. SHRI VITHALBHAI Ml. PATEL: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: SHRI ANANTRAY DEV-SHANKER DAVE: